

Why civilians are in control of military services

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Civilian control of the military is so ingrained in America that we hardly give it a second thought. Most Americans do not realize how special this relationship is and how it has contributed to the country.

The framers of the U.S. Constitution worked to ensure the military would be under civilian control. They did not want to emulate the European experience. The colonies had just fought a war for freedom from Britain. The king controlled the British military, and the framers had no interest in duplicating that system.

When they wrote the Constitution they separated the responsibilities for the military, placing the responsibilities firmly in civilian hands.

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution states that Congress shall have the power "to raise and support Armies" and "to provide and maintain a Navy." In addition, Congress must provide for the state militias when they are called to federal service.

Article II, Section 2 states, "The President shall be the Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States when called

into the actual Service of the United States."

Congress has the power to declare war and to make the rules for governing the military.

So the framers spread responsibilities for the military around. The president and Congress had to work together to use the military.

In the early days of the republic, before the concept of civilian control of the military sank in, some military officers actively plotted against the government.

Gen James Wilkinson was the senior military officer from June 15, 1800, to Jan. 27, 1812. He fought in the Revolutionary War and outfitted the Continental Army. He was forced to resign rather than answer charges he embezzled funds. After the revolution he allied himself with Aaron Burr and went back on active duty.

Gen Wilkinson became a key figure in the plan to induce what was then the "southwest United States" to form a separate nation allied to Spain. He took an oath of allegiance to Spain, spied for his new, secret patron and received an annual Spanish pension of \$4,000. He was the governor of the Louisiana Territory from 1805 to 1806.

When his involvement with Vice President Burr became common knowledge, Wilkinson turned informant, telling President Jefferson that Burr was plotting to dis-

rupt the Union. He was the chief prosecution witness against Burr and narrowly escaped indictment himself.

He continued as the ranking officer in the Army through 1812, when his incompetence and scheming were finally recognized, and he was relieved. An official inquiry left him untouched. He spent his remaining years in Mexico receiving the Spanish stipend.

With the growth of political parties, an officer's political allegiance became important. President John Adams appointed Federalist officers to the military. As Jefferson's private secretary, Army Capt Meriwether Lewis examined the "Republican" (later Democratic) credentials of his fellow Army officers.

This reinforced the belief in the U.S. military that officers should not participate in politics. They should follow the orders of the president and the wishes of the Congress no matter who was in power.

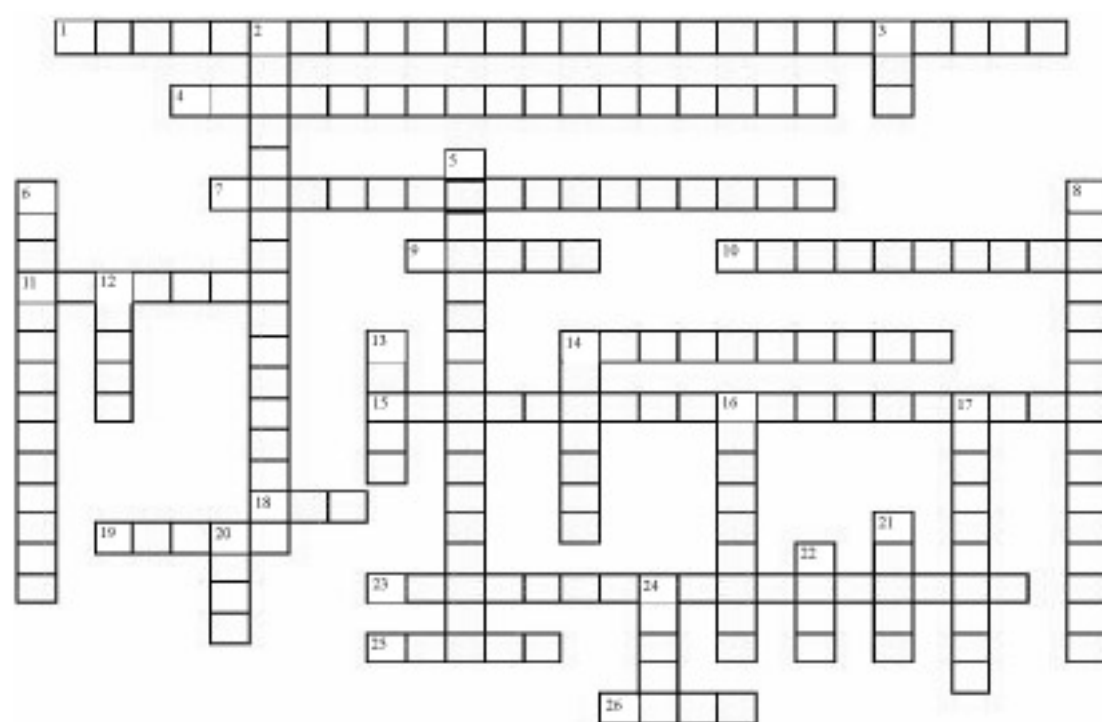
The U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., did much to promulgate this idea. Still, even as more West Pointers joined the Army, some officers played politics.

During the war with Mexico from 1846 to 1848, news-



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Crossword puzzle



Across

1. Money for critical skills
4. Medicine by mail
7. Veteran's Assistance education program
9. No medical co-payments
10. Education credits for knowledge
11. Airmen retraining program
14. 2000 survey: #1 reason to stay in AF
15. Great place assistance
18. "Holds" on AF job
19. 30 days paid each year
23. Voluntary savings program
25. Quarterly overseas assignment list
26. Military grocery store

Courtesy of MSgt Michael Faulkingham
Career assistance adviser

Down

2. 75 percent available for education
3. Zero out-of-pocket by 2005
5. Free bachelor's degree
6. Free air travel
8. An assignment you choose
12. \$30,000 at 15 years
13. Contributes to base MWR
14. Finance information at fingertips
16. Increased responsibility
17. Allowances are _____
20. Can be converted to MGIB by Oct. 31
21. In-service use of MGIB
22. 80 cents per \$10,000
24. Servicemembers are paid .5 percent — federal employees cost index

We should know the medical rules

By Col Boyce Burley III
Chief, AFSPC Mission Teams

It was Christmas Day last year and our family was skiing at a resort in Colorado. It was a wonderful family outing in a perfect setting. Then my 21-year-old son fell on the slope, hit a tree and our family's life turned upside down.

My son had a head injury that required brain surgery and a month's hospital stay. He is expected to fully recover but it's a long road until that day.

It's a happy ending but it could have been a personal financial disaster as well as a medical ordeal.

That's when my other family came in to help — my Air Force family.

We take this family for granted and become used to the benefits we receive — paychecks, 30 days of leave a year and medical benefits. We

just assume that the Air Force family will be there as a safety net in case anything goes wrong in our lives. That's what I did. However, working with our medical and personnel people after the accident, we found out there are rules with TRICARE that, if ignored, could prove disastrous for a family in a similar situation.

For example, TRICARE eligibility rules are especially critical for everyone with a child of college age to understand. Did you know that dependents must be full-time college students the semester before their 21st birthday to remain eligible for medical coverage? Many dependents work while in college and may not be aware there are a minimum number of college hours required to stay eligible in the Air Force medical system. Also, once a dependent turns 21 his military ID card expires and certain criteria must be met before a new card is issued. Understanding all the rules is essential if the system will work for you.

In our case, our prayers were answered and everything worked out, both medically and financially. But we immediately saw how easily it could have been otherwise if the requirements were not followed and understood.

I hope no one has first-hand knowledge of a medical disaster in your family like we did in the Burley family. The one thing you can do to prepare for a medical emergency is to never take your benefits for granted. Understand the rules. Then with simple precautions, you can ensure that the Air Force family takes care of its own. They sure took care of us.

"I hope that no one has first-hand knowledge of a medical disaster ..."